

# THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

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## I.

### THE PECUNIARY CONDITION OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE following brief extract from the *Christian Examiner*, a work which is already arrived at a high station as a literary, as well as moral and religious periodical, exhibits a correct view of the pecuniary state and prospects of the medical profession in this country; and however agreeable it might be to hope an earlier and richer recompense for our labors, we fully accord with its learned author in the opinion, that the prohibition of this or any other prescriptively affluent class in the community, "forms the most beautiful feature of our political system." The physician should cheerfully share with the lawyer, the divine, the mechanic and others, the sacrifice necessary to maintain this feature unimpaired; and the more so, since the sacrifice itself is, undoubtedly, in a majority of cases, immediately conducive to his own personal welfare, as well as to the good of his country.

The medical profession is certainly not eminently the walk of rich men. It presents little chance for those bold speculations, which, in their fortunate results, are the sources of affluence. It confines its attentive professors to a quiet,

retired, and private circle of duties, little connected with the bustle and business of the moving and active world. It has other thoughts and other feelings for its daily conversation—other and deeper tones of sentiment, that sound the utter feebleness of all the wealth of worlds to give happiness or peace. The medical man, who has the confidence of society in his professional skill, has a mind too much occupied with the distresses of his fellow beings, is drawn too constantly into the chamber of disease, is a witness too often of disappointments, which the feebleness and frailties of life interpose between hope and enjoyment, to be in any respect a money-making man. His professional emoluments may be large. They are justly so, if they can in any degree repay that anxiety and interest, which throw on him no small part of the agony he may be unable to alleviate; or if they would reward that deep solicitude and care with which he ministers to a family diseased. But professional fees, even at the close of a very long and active life, hardly compare with the profits of one fortunate voyage, or the successful operations of a single day on the exchange. If wealth comes to the medical man by the accumulation of his daily gains, it comes only when the desire of using it to any personal advantage has passed away, and its great end is

to portion off a daughter, or aid a son in that education which may lay the foundation of his usefulness in society.

But the medical profession, like that of law, is crowded with ardent competitors. The success which may enable a man to accumulate a fortune is rare. It is the result of accident, which unfrequently occurs, or of great talents and sagacity, which very few possess. Most men are contented with a competency, and many fail of acquiring even that. As an intellectual, and thus a very useful class of a community, medical men are entitled to high respect and esteem. As a class indispensable to the preservation of the greatest of human blessings, they are invaluable. As a generous, liberal, disinterested class, forward to render their aid in charitable and beneficent operations, where benevolence or humanity can be promoted, or suffering can be relieved, they are, in this country, eminently entitled to the gratitude of their fellow citizens. But, as a wealthy class, able if they were willing, or willing if they were able, to do anything for the support of a monied aristocracy, or to give any assistance to any scheme adverse to popular rights, the medical men of the United States are, of all others, the most distant from any possible suspicion.

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## II.

### CASES OF NEURALGIA, TREATED SUCCESSFULLY BY MR. TEALE.

WE have spoken, on a former occasion, of Mr. Teale's treatise on Irritation of the Spinal Marrow and the Ganglia of the Sympathetic. The reader had then the promise of some of the cases offered by

Mr. T. in confirmation of his views—some examples of the efficacy of remedies, in these complaints, when applied near the origin of the nerves which supply the part affected. The five following pages cannot be better improved than by recording a few of these cases.

#### CASE V.—*Neuralgia of the Mamma, or "Irritable Breast."*

Mrs. —, æt. 48, but without having experienced any change in the catamenia, of a healthy appearance, and mother of a large family, had suffered about seven years from a painful affection of the left breast. On examination, it was found to be exquisitely sensitive to the slightest touch; it was somewhat increased in size, and irregularly indurated, having a knotty feel, and an obscure sense of tumors, as if the glandular structure were enlarged at different parts. The integuments and cellular substance between the breast and clavicle, and towards the axilla, were thickened. There was a constant sense of uneasiness in the part, but her chief sufferings arose from its highly sensible state, which constantly exposed her to pain from the irritation of her dress, or any accidental contact. Her spirits were depressed, and an apprehension that the disease would prove cancerous, although she was repeatedly assured of the contrary, was a source of great anxiety. Leeches, evaporating lotions, and warm fomentations, had been employed, and medical treatment had been particularly directed to the digestive organs: these means were occasionally productive of slight alleviation, but never of permanent benefit. The complaint varied in degree, being sometimes less severe for a few weeks, without any obvious cause for the temporary amendment.

Whilst in this state (September, 1827), she became subject to pains in the scalp, and vertigo, attended with flatulence. The symptoms directed my attention to the spine, which, on examination, was found to be tender in several parts. The most painful vertebrae were the second cervical, the seventh cervical, and two upper dorsal. Leeches were applied to these parts, with considerable relief to the pains in the scalp, and vertigo. Since that time, she has been occasionally in the habit of applying leeches, a blister, or a sinapism, of her own accord, when there has been any return of uneasiness in the head.

On making inquiry (August 10th, 1829), respecting the complaint in the breast, of which I had not heard any mention for several months, she tells me that from the time of her commencing the treatment by local applications to the spine, the affection of the breast has disappeared. The pain and swelling are removed, and the breast resembles the other in every respect.

The circumstance of finding a portion of the spine tender, and the removal of the tenderness by suitable remedies being unexpectedly accompanied with relief of the breast, could not fail to produce a powerful impression on my mind, and to excite a suspicion that this irritable affection of the breast was a neuralgia of that part dependent on disease of the spinal marrow.

#### CASE VII.—*Intercostal Neuralgia.*

Jan. 1, 1828.—I was requested to visit Mr. H., æt. 40, who had been much out of health for several months. He complained of a constant pain in the right side of the chest, occupying the intercostal spaces between the fourth and seventh ribs. These spaces, to the

extent of a few inches, were tender on pressure, and the pain was increased by deep inspiration. The intercostal muscles at this part were occasionally affected with spasm. His most intense sufferings, however, were caused by acute pains shooting through this part of the chest, extending to the back, and darting thence towards the shoulder: these pains would sometimes strike through the left side also, and then the chest felt completely encircled by the pain. The dull, fixed pain was constant during the day, and became a little relieved by recumbency; the darting pains recurred at intervals of a few minutes throughout the day, were less frequent, but occasionally very severe during the night. He suffered sometimes from similar darting pains, but of less violence, in the scalp. Pulse natural; tongue slightly furred; bowels regular; appetite deficient; occasional flatulence; frequent cough, without expectoration; considerable emaciation.

His symptoms have existed, in this degree of severity, about five or six weeks; but for a few months he has been much out of health, and has gradually lost flesh. He has frequently suffered from the pain in the side for ten years, and has seldom been entirely free from it. A few years ago, considerable fear was entertained that he was consumptive; and his friends have lately felt great anxiety from a similar apprehension, more particularly as he has sustained the severe loss of an amiable wife from pulmonary disease a few months ago. He has lately undergone a great variety of medical treatment, without relief; leeches and blisters have been applied to the painful part of the chest, without benefit.

On examining the spine, there was a very decided tenderness in the third and fourth dorsal vertebræ, of which he was not previously aware ; but on his attention being directed to this part, he recollected that it had often been the seat of a sensation of heat and of some uneasiness, and remarked that the darting pains in the chest appeared to strike to and from that part.

The plan of treatment recommended, consisted in recumbency, and local antiphlogistic remedies to the tender part of the spine. From the 1st to the 25th of January, dry cupping was twice employed, leeches twice, a blister three times, and a sinapism once. This may appear a rapid repetition of painful remedies in so short a time ; but they were generally repeated at the request of the patient, from the decided relief of the pains in the chest, which he obtained after each application. After the 25th, a degree of irritation was kept up in the skin over the tender vertebræ, by a liniment containing oil of turpentine. The medical treatment was extremely simple ; consisting of an occasional dose of rhubarb, and an effervescing draught, which he found grateful in allaying a troublesome sensation of thirst. By the 25th of January, he was so much relieved as to resume his usual avocations ; the pain in the side could only be perceived occasionally, and in a very slight degree. He was directed to take the sulphate of quinine, and to continue the use of the liniment for a few weeks. On the 20th of February, he considered himself perfectly well.

Aug. 26th, 1829.—Since the last date, he has enjoyed better health than for several preceding years, has gained flesh and become stout in figure. He has entered

with great activity both into his business and recreations. A few times, "after taking cold," he has felt slight uneasiness in the back and pain in the side ; but these were so trifling as to occasion no inconvenience.

**CASE XIII.—*Dyspepsia, Pulsation in the Epigastrium, &c.***

June 5th, 1828.—Mrs. W., æt. 23, married, but has had no children ; complains of pain in the left side of the abdomen, an oppressive weight or load at the stomach after eating, constant weariness, and extreme muscular debility. These unpleasant symptoms have affected her during the last five weeks. The pain in the left side is seated in the muscles, extends between the lowest ribs and crista of the ilium, for about five inches transversely ; it is a little increased on pressure ; is fixed, and continues both day and night. There is a sense of constriction at the lower part of the chest, and a feeling as if a cord were tied round the waist, midway between the ensiform cartilage and umbilicus, which compels her to stoop forward. At night this corded sensation is sometimes so violent as to cause her to raise herself into a sitting posture, with the body bent forward. After taking food, either liquid or solid, the sensation of a heavy ball or weight is felt at the stomach, and continues generally for about an hour and a half. There is almost always a distressing pulsation in the epigastrium, which never ceases entirely, but only at intervals abates in violence, and is much aggravated by the ingestion of food. Frequent remittings occur soon after taking food, and often, when it has been swallowed, it is gradually regurgitated by mouthfuls, until the stomach is evacuated ; fla-

tulence in a slight degree, and acidity, constantly attend the digestive process.

On inquiry, I find that she has aching pains in the legs, and such a feeling of weakness that the exercise of walking is attended with great difficulty and exertion; there is soreness of the skin, extending over the thighs, particularly felt on rubbing the hands over them, and prickling sensations, which principally take the course of the saphena nerve. The toes are frequently drawn into an involuntary state of flexion, particularly at night, and she is unable to rectify them by the effort of the extensors. On examining the spine, there does not appear any deviation from its natural form, but there is considerable tenderness on pressing the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth dorsal vertebrae; a slight degree of tenderness below, and a still slighter degree in a few of those above.

A blister to be applied over the tender vertebrae.

10th.—She feels much better, and says she is "not like the same being." The blister was applied on the evening of the 6th: on the next morning, the pain in the abdomen had vanished. Since that time, she has not felt the pain and weight at the epigastrium, and the pulsation is greatly diminished. The food has not been regurgitated; digestion has been performed comfortably; she feels that her "food does her good." She is free from flatulence and acidity; the muscular power of the lower extremities is increased, and the prickling sensations and numbness have left her entirely.

On pressing the spine, only a slight trace of tenderness can be detected in the original situation. Ordered another blister, to guard against relapse.

16th.—She considers herself perfectly recovered.

Eight months after this date, she had continued well, and had enjoyed better health than for several preceding years.

**CASE XV.—Flatulence, Pyrosis, Neuralgia of Thoracic Parietes.**

June 12th, 1828.—Mrs. B., æt. 64, an emaciated old woman, complains of being greatly annoyed by discharges of air from the stomach. She has pain across the epigastrium, resembling cramp, increased at intervals, and when it abates a little, is replaced by a sense of soreness in the region of the stomach; corded sensation round the waist; sudden and copious discharges of air from the stomach, occurring frequently during the course of twenty-four hours, and sometimes continuing for an hour at a time; pyrosis in a great degree. No affection of the extremities. She has suffered from these symptoms for several months, but in a more violent degree during the last fortnight. Great tenderness on pressing the fourth, fifth, seventh, and lower dorsal vertebrae. Four days ago, she applied a blister to the epigastrium, but without the slightest relief; indeed, she considered the symptoms were aggravated by it.

Apply a blister to the lower dorsal vertebrae.

19th.—The corded sensation and pyrosis ceased during the application of the blister: the attacks of flatulence and distension are much reduced in frequency, violence, and duration. There is a little tenderness in the fifth dorsal vertebra: the lower part of the spine cannot be examined, as the skin remains painful from the blister.

Six leeches to be applied near the fifth dorsal vertebra.

On the 24th, the flatulence caused

very slight inconvenience ; and on the 2d of July, she considered herself quite well.

**CASE XIX.—*Palpitation, Affection of the Stomach, Leucorrhœa. &c.***

May 19th, 1827.—Miss H——, æt. 22, complains of pain and oppression at the stomach, vomitings, pain in the head, palpitations, and general debility.

On more particular inquiry, I find she is subject to frequent vomitings, especially after eating ; painful oppression, a tightness across the epigastrium, increased by taking food, and slightly, though not entirely, relieved by vomiting ; pain in the left side, between the seventh and eighth ribs ; tightness across the upper part of the chest ; attacks of palpitations, which continue for a few minutes, and recur, after short intervals, both day and night, but more violently towards evening and in the early part of the night ; when the attack of palpitations has been more violent than usual, the interval is rather longer ; the palpitations are always accompanied with dyspnoea and wheezing sensation, which is perceptible on applying the hand over the upper part of the chest. She also suffers from a frequent loud cough, unattended with expectoration ; a constant tickling sensation in the throat, a little above the upper part of the sternum ; aching pains in the elbows and shoulders ; prickling sensations at the tips of the fingers ; aching pain at the upper part of the neck, and in the occipital region ; acute darting pains in both temples, varying in intensity, and attended with violent throbbings ; vertigo on suddenly moving the head, or on directing the attention to anything ; fixed pain in the abdominal muscles on each side ; aching in the loins ;

pain in the bladder both before and after evacuation, and frequent inclination to pass urine ; profuse leucorrhœa ; pain in the thighs and knees ; occasional prickling sensations in the legs ; frequent cramp in the calves of the legs ; shiverings, and sensation of cold water trickling down the back ; catamenia regular, but attended with pain ; bowels regular.

Her complaints undergo considerable aggravation in the evening and in the early part of the night ; the exacerbations occur even if she be entirely recumbent.

She has not enjoyed good health for many years ; but has been more severely afflicted during the last fourteen weeks. Has been habitually subject to leucorrhœa for upwards of five years, and has been more or less troubled with the palpitations and disorder of the stomach during that time. She has undergone a great variety of medical treatment.

The spine is tender throughout its whole extent, but more particularly at the second and third cervical vertebræ, from the fifth to the tenth dorsal, and at the two lower lumbar vertebræ and sacrum.

Recumbency, and the abstraction of blood from the neighborhood of the spine by cupping, were recommended. She was confined to bed five weeks, during which time the most tender parts of the spine were cupped three times, and the turpentine liniment was used night and morning. After the first operation, she felt greatly relieved both of the palpitations and vomiting, and was able to sleep comfortably ; although, for a length of time, she had been subject to watchfulness, and had not been able to procure repose even from opiates, which had previously been freely administered.

After each succeeding abstraction of blood by cupping, most decided improvement was experienced, and at the end of five weeks she was so far recovered as to leave her bed, but occasionally reclined upon the sofa when she felt weary. She also persevered in the use of the turpentine for a few weeks longer, after which she perfectly regained health, and became active and strong. The palpitations, pains, and affections of the stomach, entirely disappeared; and what must be particularly noticed is, that she became quite free from leucorrhœa. She continued well until June, 1829, when I was again consulted on account of a recurrence of her complaints, more particularly of the palpitations and leucorrhœa: she remained under treatment about a month, but was only recumbent a week; leeches were applied twice, and a blister three times, to the spine, after which she perfectly recovered. I have seen her this day (September 4th, 1829); she is looking well, and is free from all unpleasant symptoms. She has no leucorrhœal discharge.

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### III.

#### CASE OF PHLEGMASIA DOLENS SUCCESSFULLY TREATED BY THE APPLICATION OF THE BAN- DAGE.

*Communicated in a Letter from Dr.  
WILLIAM T. YOUNG, of Triana,  
Alabama, to Professor DUDLEY.*

SIR,—Believing that you do always feel a lively interest in the success of the bandage over morbid action, in whatever part of the system it may take up its abode, I had intended, at this time, to give you the full history of a case of phleg-

masia dolens, of long standing; but am prevented from doing so, in consequence of misplacing my notes made on the case: hence I can only communicate the termination of it for the present.

The subject of this truly painful disease was, at the time of her illness, in the 36th year of her age, and had given birth, a few days before, to a fifth child. She has light blue eyes, and dark-colored hair; sallow complexion; sanguineo-bilious temperament; fat habit of body, and rather lower than the ordinary stature of her sex. When I was requested to visit her, the first time, with the attending physician, her situation presented to my mind a truly lamentable aspect; for she had been confined to the bed upwards of three months, and had more the appearance of a dead body dried, than anything I could imagine, with the exception of her lower extremities, which were swelled to that degree, that the skin covering them appeared just ready to burst in several places.

As every rule of practice that could be made to bear on the case was gone through with, by her able physician, before I was called in, with the exception of the bandage, I really was at a loss to know what farther to advise for her then situation; but after examining the case attentively again, I came to the conclusion to recommend, in opposition to their prejudices, the judicious application of the bandage—not, however, from my own knowledge of its efficacy, for I had not yet used it in that disease—but from your testimony of its utility in that affection; and although my advice was reluctantly received by the physician, as well as her friends, I, in their presence, applied it on both her legs, from the toes to her



hips. You cannot imagine my gratification on my next visit, five days after, at finding the bandage quite loose, the limbs much reduced in size, and the patient decidedly better. At this visit I took off the bandage, and reapplied it firmly and neatly on the limbs; and by the use of it, with a generous diet, the lady was able, in three weeks from the date of the first application, to walk across her chamber, and, in two weeks more, was restored to her usual good health. The success of the bandage in this case may go to prove, to every candid inquirer after truth, that the true pathology of that disease has been very imperfectly understood.

*Transylvania Journ. of Med.*

#### IV.

##### MR. DAVIS' REPORT.

*To the Editor of the Boston Med. and Surg. Journal.*

SIR,—I am glad to find that the subject of providing facilities for the study of human anatomy, is likely again to engage the attention of the legislature and the public; not because it is very probable that any very liberal act will be passed during this session, or that any very thorough change in the opinions of the community is to be effected by a single document, however able and however widely circulated: but it is well that the subject, having once been presented, should be kept before the eyes of reading and reflecting men, and that the absurdity of existing prejudices on this subject should repeatedly be exposed, until we gain by perseverance, what mere argument will not procure for us. The truth is, the opposition to an anat-

omy bill is not so much matter of reasoning, as the impulse of feeling; few undertake to resist or reply to the arguments in detail, but most, if not all, shrink at the conclusion to which they lead. Tell a man that the end and aim of the science of medicine is the safety and welfare of the human race; he readily assents. Show him that this cannot be pursued with any success independently of anatomy; he readily admits their indissoluble connection. Represent to him the impossibility of studying anatomy without subjects; he grants it: but ask him for the body of his wife or his child, or even for that of the humblest pauper in his village, for dissection, and he revolts at the idea. Now this feeling must be overcome by feeling. The public must be convinced that our interests are their interests; that they are in fact cruel to themselves, to their families, and to their poor neighbors, when they refuse to forward and encourage this branch of science; that for the dissection of the dead, if this be refused, must and will be substituted the mangling of the living; and that the sin and the sacrifice will lie at their own doors: of all this they must be fully and deeply persuaded, before we can obtain a legislative enactment very favorable to anatomy. Now the means by which this change of feeling is to be brought about are various. Something, no doubt, can be effected, by making the subject of anatomy and its connections familiar with the public, as is in some measure effected by popular lectures. Something, too, is to be hoped from the personal influence of practitioners among their patients and friends,—an influence which is always considerable, and which cannot certainly be more



beneficially employed. But the most potent engine, after all, is the press ; and it is by publications of a popular character, diffused extensively among the reading classes, that an effect of this kind is mainly to be hoped. Gradual, we are convinced, the change must be ; it is only by a continual dropping, by renewed efforts at persuasion, that this barrier of general prejudice will ever be broken down. It is, then, as one of these means, that we hail the appearance of Mr. Davis' Report ; it adds one to the number of the appeals from the profession to the public, or rather, we might say, from the public to its own tribunal, which we are confident are not unheeded, and which we cannot but believe will finally be successful. It is in this view, rather than with reference to its general character, that I offer you a few brief remarks on this document.

It may be observed, in the first place, that, considered as emanating from the Chairman of the Committee, the Report appears as the production of an individual not personally familiar with the subject of which it treats. On the whole, we may regard this circumstance as a fortunate one, with reference to the effect it is likely to produce. There can certainly be no surmise of a professional bias, on the part of the author, in favor of the cause which he espouses. Mr. Davis comes forward as one of the public, as the representative of their interest, and an advocate for their welfare. On the other hand, it is to be admitted, that, on a subject like the present, one not acquainted with its details must think and write with some degree of constraint. There is a feeling of the danger of committing one's self, by some in-

accuracy of expression or some error in point of fact, which interferes with the freedom of language necessary to convey a strong impression and to produce conviction. We say not this as intending to reflect on Mr. D.'s performance, in which, considering this disadvantage, he has been remarkably successful ; and indeed, were it not for the unity and similarity of style which pervades the composition, we should be led to suppose that those passages which refer to surgical topics, and particularly to hernia, must have been furnished him by some professional friend. At all events, his good judgment is manifested in the attention given to those portions which, from their practical character, are peculiarly important.

In the sketch of the history of medicine with which the first part of the Report is occupied, the author displays much learning and research, and has adduced many curious historical facts, which, even to medical readers, will be new and interesting. I am not certain, however, that, in showing the veneration with which the faculty were regarded in former times, he adds anything to the force of the argument for the importance of anatomy ; for it is well known, that, whatever other claims the practitioners of Egypt or of Greece had to the admiration of their countrymen, a profound knowledge of this branch of our science did not constitute one. Neither is the example of these countries necessary to show that the medical character ought to be held in respect, since we believe all are willing to admit this proposition without argument. Of respect, indeed—that is, of blind vulgar admiration—physicians have now, and have always had, enough

and to spare, *honoris satis superque*. In fact, it is, and ever has been, one of the most serious obstacles to the real usefulness and respectability of the profession, that its members are looked up to as a sort of astrologers; as men who produce ends without means, see what is invisible, and gain knowledge by a mysterious inspiration wholly different from the vulgar mode in which it is acquired by other descriptions of persons. That there are those who take advantage of this superstitious feeling, on the part of the public, for their private benefit and emolument, there can be no doubt; but it were better for the interest, as well as the character, of the profession generally, that these vague and extravagant notions should finally be exploded. We are told in history of one Menecrates, a Macedonian physician, who was so much applauded by the people for the wonderful cures which he performed, that he began to fancy himself actually a Deity; and that King Philip, to cure him of this vain conceit, invited him to a banquet, where, instead of being served, like the other guests, with meat and wine, he was placed by himself near a splendid altar, and nearly suffocated by the fumes of burning incense. The situation of the modern Menecrates, if not as ridiculous, is quite as disagreeable; his vanity is fed with adulation, but the most valuable mental aliment is refused him; and while he gains credit for superhuman skill, he is denied the means of acquiring that knowledge, by means of which alone he can be truly respectable or useful.

I observe appended to the Report, answers, from the most eminent physicians throughout the country, to two general questions respecting the importance of ana-

tomy as a branch of general science, and the adequacy of the present means in this department of education. To these questions there could be, in fact, but a single answer returned, by persons acquainted with the nature of medical practice in this country, and the difficulties with which this study is attended; and we regret that the effect of this answer is weakened, as we think it is in the present case, by being repeated in every variety of size, shape, and language, which the various circumstances of the persons to whom it was addressed induce them to adopt. Some of these replies, it is too evident, are not calculated to aid the cause; and from the mere consideration of their number, a part, we think, might judiciously have been omitted. Had the questions been so worded as to have drawn forth the facts, in the possession of each individual, illustrating the necessity of anatomical knowledge, which we have no doubt might have been procured in abundance, a mass of documents would have been presented infinitely more convincing than a hundred general opinions, though signed by great names, and backed with all the authority of the great French hospitals.

These, however, are trifling blemishes, and can only be regarded as such when viewed in reference to the effect likely to be produced by the Report, in reconciling the public mind to some provision for the support of this important science. For the rest, Mr. Editor, I would again express my satisfaction at seeing this Report, rejoicing that the task of drawing it up has fallen into so able hands, and assuring its author, with confidence, of the gratitude of the profession, of whose cause he has peculiarly avowed himself the supporter.—Yours, respectfully, A SUBSCRIBER.

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## MEDICAL JOURNAL.

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BOSTON, FEBRUARY 15, 1831.

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### THE ANATOMY BILL.

ON Friday last, the bill, offered by the Committee of the House of Representatives, for the purpose of legalizing the study of anatomy, passed to be engrossed, by a vote almost unanimous. Should this bill pass without difficulty through its other stage, and be confirmed by the Senate, of which there is little doubt, Massachusetts will have added to its other high honors, the honor of first legalizing the dissection of the human subject, under such restrictions as good order and the strictest propriety may demand, when this can be done without wounding the sensibilities of any living being.

The bill has not thus passed in the precise form in which it was reported by the Committee and published in this Journal. The amendments which have been made in it, go to limit, in a very great degree, the extent of the immediate usefulness of the enactment; but they leave, we apprehend, as great a facility to the acquirement of correct anatomical knowledge, as we have any reason to expect of the public at the present time. They exempt from dissection, under any and all circumstances, the bodies of all strangers or travellers, or other persons who may die suddenly, without an opportunity to make known who they are or whence they came; and

they exempt also, in the same unequivocal manner, all "the towns' poor." Although this last exception will deprive the anatomist of *some* subjects, which, of all others, are the most proper for dissection, and may be used for the advancement of science, with the least possibility of inflicting a single pang,—yet, it gives a direct, express, and perfect security from such destination, to the whole mass of town paupers, which, though amply given to the virtuous by other provisions of the act, may tend to conciliate the feelings of a very sensitive public, and ensure perhaps, the more effective attainment of the object of the bill, in the very few cases which have been left for its accomplishment. When this act shall have remained a few years on the statute book, and its practical usefulness have been fully tested and made clear to the public, then, any unnecessary exceptions it contains may be removed, if such alterations are deemed requisite and proper. Suffice it for the present, that the members of our Legislature have shown so much discernment, so much independence, so much superiority to vulgar prejudice, and such a wise regard to the true welfare of their constituents and the honor of the Commonwealth, as thus publicly to sanction a principle which has so long struggled beneath the weight of misguided or unsubdued feeling.

There is one point, at least, of importance to the profession, which will be clearly attained by the present

act. As the law now stands, if a physician have in his possession any part of a dead human body—be it but a skeleton or a single bone, this possession is considered *prima facie* evidence that he came by it improperly, and he is subject to all the penalties of the law, as much as if he is detected in obtaining or dissecting a human subject; unless he can show, by sufficient evidence, how he came in possession of such part of a subject, and that it was not unlawfully procured. Thus is almost every physician in the Commonwealth liable to be annoyed by a prosecution, fine, and imprisonment, if an offended or troublesome person chooses so to annoy him. It will be observed that the 4th Section of the present act entitles the physician to hold such property without reserve, and secures to him and his student the quiet and undisturbed possession and use of human subjects, or any parts of the same, for purposes of dissection and scientific investigation.

In the course of the debate on this subject on Thursday last, an honorable member from this city, after expressing very briefly, but impressively, his accord with the sentiments expressed in this bill, added, that so solemn was his conviction of the great benefits to society of human dissection, and of its unqualified necessity to the comfort and happiness of mankind, that it was not improbable he should make, in his will, such a disposition of his own body.

When the subject shall have been disposed of finally, by both branches

of the legislature, we shall publish the bill, if it becomes a law, in the form in which it was enacted; but, at present, we should be guilty of a gross neglect of duty, were we not to add that the profession and the community are under great obligations to JOHN BRAZER DAVIS, Esq., Chairman of the Anatomy Committee, for his indefatigable and able efforts to remove the unreasonable restrictions imposed, by the law, on the pursuits of anatomical science.

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#### LIVING PHYSICIANS OF PARIS.

A VERY neat little duodecimo, of 130 pages, has been published a few days in this city, by Messrs. Carter, Hendee & Babcock, which gives a brief sketch of the character and writings of some of the most distinguished medical men in Paris. These sketches are translated from the French, by Dr. Bartlett, of Lowell. The original is a much larger work, and Dr. B. has offered the American faculty an account of such only of the Physicians and Surgeons of the French metropolis, as have been in a measure known in this country, by their writings or their general professional reputation. About half the work is devoted to a history of the Surgeon of the Hôtel Dieu, and the Physician of the Val de Grâce;—these are unquestionably at the head of the two great branches of the profession in Paris, and many events in their professional course, and circumstances illustrative of their peculiar habits and characters, are set forth, in this work, with brevity and spirit. It also contains sketches

of Chaussier, the great Desgenettes, Dubois, Pelletan, Marjolin, Riche-rand, and Civiale. In the account of the latter, are embodied some useful remarks on that admirable surgical improvement (lithotritry) with which the name of Civiale will ever be associated.

The memoirs of Dupuytren and of Broussais, are accompanied by lithographic portraits of those distinguished individuals.

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#### RESPIRATION OF FISHES.

It is a familiar fact, that the function in fishes which corresponds to that of respiration in land animals, is performed by the gills—the oxygen necessary to the renewal of the circulating fluid being obtained from the water, successive portions of which are transmitted over the surface of these organs. The question has very naturally suggested itself to philosophers, why it happens that these animals are unable to support life in the atmosphere by which this principle is so abundantly furnished; why, in fact, the process does not go on even more perfectly when the gills of the animal are exposed to atmospheric air. The usual explanation of this fact has been, that the air acts on the gills of the fish by producing an excessive stimulus; that the blood, instead of receiving its due share of oxygen, imbibes an excess of this principle, and becomes incapable of maintaining the proper actions of the system; and, in fact, that the fish, when placed in air, is affected precisely in the same manner as land animals, when forced to

respire pure oxygen. This explanation has generally been regarded as sufficiently satisfactory, and derives confirmation from the effect which is noticed in warm-blooded animals, when confined in oxygen gas. It is found that death takes place as certainly, and nearly as soon, as when atmospheric air is employed; and that evident inconvenience is produced from the moment that its inspiration commences. Hence it seems natural to infer that similar and even greater inconvenience must be felt by an animal removed from water to air, and that the continuance of this undue stimulation for a certain time may be sufficient to produce death.

A new mode, however, of accounting for this phenomenon has been lately suggested, which refers the embarrassment in respiration, under these circumstances, not to the chemical, but to the mechanical influence of the change of medium. M. Flourens, who proposes this idea, has directed particular attention to the structure of the gills, and to their relative arrangement. He observes that there exist, in the greatest number of fishes, four pairs of gills on each side, forming sixteen laminae, and presenting thirty-two surfaces to the action of the fluid. All the gills placed on the same side, when abandoned to themselves, collapse, and a certain degree of muscular effort is required to separate them. This is readily effected while the fish remains in the water, and takes place as often as a portion of this fluid passes over the organs. When, however, the animal is removed into

a different medium, these movements become irregular, and, after a short time, cease entirely. The gills then become collapsed; and in place of the thirty-two surfaces previously exposed to the action of the atmosphere, there remain only four presented by the opposite sides of the two bundles. According to this view, therefore, the animal expires, not because the action of the atmosphere on the circulating fluid is injurious, but because, on being removed from its proper element, it is incapable of making those motions which may bring its respiratory organs into contact with the air, and thus permit them to abstract its oxygen. The details of the observations by which M. Flourens supports his views are not published; they have, however, been submitted to the French Academy, and have excited considerable interest.

#### AMPUTATION AT THE KNEE JOINT.

THREE cases in which this operation was performed successfully by M. Velpeau, at the French Hospital St. Antoine, are reported in the *Lancette Française*. After some remarks on these cases, M. V. concludes by recommending the following method of doing the operation:—

The skin is divided in a circular form, three or four fingers breadth beneath the patella, without involving the muscles. In dissecting it for the purpose of turning it back, it is necessary to preserve on the inner surface the whole of the layer of fat and cellular membrane, and not to deprive it of its capillary vessels. An assistant is then to lay

hold of, and retract it towards the knee, until the ligament of the patella being divided, the instrument comes upon the interarticular space. The surgeon then divides the lateral ligaments; separates the extremities of the bones, by bending the limb a little; detaches the semilunar cartilages; cuts the cross ligaments; and concludes by dividing the vessels and nerves on a level with the reverted integuments. After having tied or twisted the popliteal artery, and the branches which may require it, the integuments are then brought together, with the angles above and below.

The conclusions drawn by M. Velpeau are—

1. That the objections to amputation at the knee joint are without foundation; and that it is in all respects preferable to amputation of the thigh.
2. That it is less dangerous, and more easy, than amputating at the thick part of the condyles, as practised by Larrey, &c.
3. That the circular incision is then best adapted to it, unless some particular circumstance should render the method by flap absolutely necessary.
4. That it permits the patient to use a wooden leg in a convenient and satisfactory manner.
5. That it ought to be adopted in all those cases in which amputation of the thigh has usually been practised.

*Combination of Iodic Acid with Vegetable Alkalies.*—It results from the experiments of M. Serullas, 1st, that morphine alone exerts a decomposing action on iodic acid, from which it separates abundantly the iodine—a character which may be taken as a distinction between this base and other alcaloids: 2d, quinine, cinchonine, strychnine, saturate iodic acid perfectly, and produce well-crystallized saline compounds.

It is supposed by the author that these new compounds of iodine and vegetable bases, may be found to possess medical qualities of a valuable character.—*Ann. de Chim.*

*Hutchinson and Yelloly on the Infrequency of Calculous Diseases among Sailors and Soldiers.*—The profession is indebted to Mr. Copland Hutchinson for having first pointed out the remarkable circumstance, that sea-faring people enjoy a comparative exemption from calculous disorders. It appears at the great Naval Hospitals, after deducting the cases of gunshot wounds, &c., only about one instance of stone occurred in 17,200 patients, whereas in the London and Provincial civil Hospitals, the number is about one in 400. Such are the results of those inquiries of which Mr. Hutchinson published an account some years ago. Mr. H. has recently given another paper which contains details on the same subject, derived from correspondents at the principal sea-port towns in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of which we can only afford space to say, that they fully corroborate the conclusions at which Mr. Hutchinson had previously arrived.

Appended to the paper are some observations on the comparative frequency of calculous disorders in Scotland, by which it appears that there occurs about one case of stone annually in every 83,300 of the inhabitants—whereas in England, according to Dr. Yelloly, the number is one in every 108,000 of the entire population. This difference Mr. Hutchinson is disposed to attribute, in some measure, to the circumstance of the lower orders in Scotland living chiefly on coarse farinaceous food, particularly oatmeal cooked in va-

rious ways. They also drink freely of strong drinks—whiskey.

Dr. Yelloly confirms the observations of Mr. Hutchinson as to the relative frequency of calculous disorders in Scotland, and adds some information tending to show that calculous diseases are very rare in Ireland. The only other point to which we think it necessary to allude is, that the infrequency of the disease among sailors, so satisfactorily made out by Mr. Hutchinson, seems also to extend, in a certain, though not equal degree, to soldiers. Dr. Yelloly states, on the authority of Sir Jas. M'Grigor, that no instance of calculus occurred between Dec., 1811, and June, 1814, though above 330,000 cases were admitted into hospital; and that only four cases of calculus have occurred in the army in Britain during the last fifteen years: in Ireland only one such case has been met with.

*New Pharmacopœia.*—We observed, some time since, a notice in the Evening Transcript, and other newspapers, that the authorities of the Massachusetts Medical Society had determined not to adopt the newly-revised United States Pharmacopœia; but as no official notice of such determination has been sent us, and it is an affair of the profession alone, and not of the public, we presume the report must be erroneous.

#### NOTICES.

THE communication respecting Mr. Halsted's vagaries will find a place next week. It came too late for this number.

With our next, the subscribers will receive an Index to the 3d volume of this Journal.

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Whole number of deaths in Boston the week ending Feb. 3d, 13. Males, 7—Females, 6. Of consumption, 4; unknown, 1; inflammation, 1; old age, 1; teething, 1; palsy, 1; fits, 1; dropsy in brain, 2; burn, 1.



## ADVERTISEMENTS.

**COPARTNERSHIP NOTICE.** The subscribers have formed a connexion in business as **CHEMISTS, DRUGGISTS & APOTHECARIES**, at Apothecaries' Hall, No 188 Washington Street, opposite Marlboro' Hotel, under the firm of **JARVIS & PEIRSON**.

**NATHAN JARVIS.**  
**GEORGE W. PEIRSON.**

**EUROPEAN LEECHES.**

**J. & P.** have a few fine European Leeches—to the application of which, when directed by Physicians, they will attend without any additional charge.  
Feb. 8.

**NEW MEDICAL BOOKS.** This day received by **CARTER, HENDEE & BABCOCK**—Treatise on Surgical Anatomy. By **ABRAHAM COLLES**, one of the Professors of Anatomy and Surgery in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, &c. &c. 2d Am. Ed., with notes, by **J. P. Hopkinson, M.D.**

Manual of Pathology, containing the Symptoms, Diagnosis and Morbid Characters of Diseases, together with an Exposition of the different Methods of Examination applicable to Affections of the Head, Chest and Abdomen. By **L. MARTINET, D.M.P.** Translated, with notes and additions, by **JONAS QUAIN, A.B.**

Pathological and Practical Researches on Diseases of the Brain and the Spinal Cord. By **JOHN ABERCROMBIE, M.D.**  
Feb. 8.

**WILLIAMS ON DISEASES OF THE CHEST.** This day received, by **CARTER & HENDEE**, "A Rational Exposition of the Physical Signs of the Diseases of the Lungs and Pleura, illustrating their Pathology and facilitating their Diagnosis." By **CHARLES J. B. WILLIAMS.**  
Dec. 6.

**BECLARD'S GENERAL ANATOMY.** **CARTER, HENDEE & BABCOCK** have this day received—Elements of General Anatomy, or a Description of every kind of Organ composing the Human Body. By **P. A. BECLARD**, Professor of Anatomy of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris. Preceded by a critical and biographical Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Author. By **OLIVIER, M.D.** Translated from the French, with Notes. By **JOSEPH TOGNO, M.D.,** Member of the Philadelphia Medical Society.  
Dec. 28.

**SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS AND CHEMICALS.** Students in want of the above articles, would do well to call, before purchasing, at **BREWER & BROTHERS'**, Nos. 90 and 92 Washington Street—Boston. Oct. 15. ep3m

**GERMAN LEECHES.** **RICHARD A. NEWELL**, Druggist, Summer Street, respectfully informs the Physicians and Public generally, that he has just received a fresh supply of the above-named *Leeches*, which will be sold at a *fair* price.

**N. B.**—Leeches sent to any part of the city, and applied, without extra charge, by day or by night. 6w—Nov. 8.

**ABERCROMBIE ON DISEASES OF THE STOMACH.** Just received by **CARTER & HENDEE**—Pathological and Practical Researches on Diseases of the Stomach, the Intestinal Canal, the Liver, and other Viscera of the Abdomen. By **JOHN ABERCROMBIE, M.D.,** Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, &c., and first Physician to his Majesty in Scotland. Sept. 28.

**SURGEON DENTIST'S MANUAL.** Just received, by **CARTER & HENDEE**, The Surgeon Dentist's Anatomical and Physiological Manual. By **G. WAITE**, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. Nov. 2.

Published weekly, by **JOHN COTTON**, at 184 Washington St. corner of Franklin St., to whom all communications must be addressed, *postpaid*.—Price three dollars per annum, if paid in advance, three dollars and a half if not paid within three months, and four dollars if not paid within the year. The postage for this is the same as for common newspapers.